

Information Item: Introduction of six new assistant property managers

The Division of Fish and Wildlife would like to introduce six new assistant property managers. Assistant property manager position vacancies were recently filled at three different DNR state fish hatcheries, two fish and wildlife areas, and another in the public access program in the south.

Andy Richards – Assistant Property Manager, Cikana Hatchery

Andy graduated from Ball State in 1986 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology and a minor in Natural Resources. Andy has been the Hatchery Biologist at Cikana Hatchery since 2004. Cikana State Fish Hatchery, located in Martinsville, has an east unit with 78 acres containing 22 earthen ponds ranging from three-tenths to 1.7 acres in size and a north unit that is a 40-acre property containing 13 earthen ponds ranging in size from three-tenths to nine-tenths of an acre. Cikana Fish Hatchery is a warm-water hatchery using modern intensive and extensive fish culture techniques. The primary species raised at Cikana include walleye, saugeye (a hybrid cross between a female walleye and male sauger), channel catfish and smallmouth bass. A typical year's production would include 20 million walleye fry, 150,000 walleye fingerlings, 25,000 saugeye fingerlings, 100,000 channel catfish fingerlings (2 to 6 inches long), 50,000 channel catfish advanced fingerlings (8 inches long) and 20,000 smallmouth bass fingerlings.

James Skipper – Assistant Property Manager, East Fork Hatchery

James graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Fisheries from Auburn University in December of 2011. He was initially hired as a seasonal intermittent at East Fork in 2012 then selected as a fulltime laborer later that year. East Fork State Fish Hatchery is the newest cool and warm water hatchery to be constructed in Indiana since the 1940s. The hatchery covers about 80 acres and contains 29 earthen ponds ranging from ½ to 6 acres in size. The pond's total is 33 acres of water. Sport fish reared at the East Fork Hatchery include walleye, hybrid walleye, striped bass, hybrid striped bass, muskellunge, channel catfish and largemouth bass. Fathead minnows are also reared for forage feeding. Total production at East Fork will range between 1 million and 15 million fish annually, depending on management needs.

Andrew Gima - Assistant Property Manager, Mixsawbah Hatchery

Andrew graduated from Purdue in 2006 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences. He then received his Master's degree at Auburn in Fisheries and allied Aquaculture. He worked with University of Washington as a Fish Hatchery Technician, USFWS as a Bio Science Technician and Fish Culturist, and finally came from Louisiana DWF as a Biologist Supervisor. Mixsawbah was constructed in 1974 for the propagation of salmonids (trout and salmon) to enhance Indiana's Lake Michigan fishery and is located in LaPorte. Mixsawbah annually produces 670,000 salmonids, with a total weight of about 35,500 pounds. Production includes chinook salmon, coho salmon, and steelhead trout. Most of these fish are stocked into tributary streams to Lake Michigan. In Indiana, these streams are Trail Creek in LaPorte County and the East Branch of the Little Calumet River in Porter County. Chinook salmon are stocked in the streams at five months of age or 3.5 inches in length. The other species are kept in the rearing ponds for 7-14 months where they grow to a size of 4.25 to 7 inches before being released.

David Potts - Assistant Property Manager, Public Access South

Dave started his career with the Division of Fish and Wildlife in 1983 as intermittent at Public Access. Over the past 30 years, he has moved from laborer to equipment operator and now assistant property manager. Dave has a great historical knowledge of the southern public access program, and is a great example of hard work and dedication. The Division of Fish & Wildlife's public access program was initiated in 1953 and strives to provide free access to Indiana waters for anglers and boaters. The program is part of a broader statewide access initiative. In addition to acquiring, developing and maintaining sites, the division works with various local, state and federal agencies to provide access to Indiana's lakes and rivers. To date, the program has funded portions of the acquisition, development and maintenance of approximately 366 public access sites; 211 sites are located in northern Indiana and 155 in southern Indiana. The list of sites includes 115 on natural lakes; 89 on impoundments; 158 on rivers and 4 on Lake Michigan. In addition, the division operates and maintains 21 public fishing areas.

Josh Singel - Assistant Property Manager, Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area

Josh graduated from Purdue University with a Biology degree and a Psychology minor. After attending Purdue, Josh was hired on as the Waterfowl Banding Technician at LaSalle FWA, then as a laborer at Willow Slough FWA. Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area is dedicated to providing quality hunting, wildlife viewing and trapping opportunities while maintaining 8,064 acres of prairie and marsh habitat. In October 2005, with the help of The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, Indiana Department of Transportation, United States Fish and Wildlife Service and many other organizations, IDNR purchased the property including the 7,200 acres under permanent WRP easement, creating Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area. With nearly 5,000 acres of shallow water wetlands, 1,300 acres of prairie and over 30 miles of levees, Goose Pond FWA provides excellent hunting, trapping, and wildlife watching opportunities.

Savanna Vaughn - Assistant Property Manager, Pigeon River Fish and Wildlife Area

Savanna M. Vaughn has been selected for the Pigeon River Assistant Property Manager. Savanna graduated in 2012 with a Bachelor's degree in Wildlife Management from Purdue University, and during that time she worked with wild caught and captive bred Allegheny woodrats and studied wildlife management in Tanzania Africa. In 2015, Savanna achieved a Master's degree in Wildlife Ecology from IPFW where she studied the short-term response of deer mice and white-footed mice to invasive shrub control. Most recently, Savanna worked as an intermittent Laborer at Tri County FWA. Pigeon River Fish & Wildlife Area is located in LaGrange and Steuben counties and maintains 11,794 acres of land, 529 acres of lakes and impoundments and 17 miles of free flowing river.